

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, August 5, 2013

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: William O'Dell, Chair, Diana Campbell and Lynn Wainwright

School Committee, Administration & Guests: Karen L. (6:40 p.m.), Marj M. (6:45 p.m.) Mario Andrade, Asst. Superintendent; Patricia Brissette, Wellness Committee; Christine O'Connor, Bristol Phoenix

Meeting called to order by Bill O. at 6:36 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Diana C. motioned to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2013 meeting; Lynn W. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Health & Wellness Policy (JHCG)

The Subcommittee reviewed in depth six out of ten pages of the proposed changes to the existing draft of the Health & Wellness Policy. Lynn W. received recommendations from RIDE as well as the District's legal counsel which are reflected in the proposed draft. During review, the following subcommittee comments were made:

District's Nutrition Standards-

1 - Bristol Warren School Meals

Lynn W. stated the WellSAT recommendation concerning lunch periods is to put a time limit which will allow students enough time to go through the lunch line as well as eat their meal. Marj M. commented that there isn't a way to guarantee short lunch line waiting times citing the instance of malfunctioning cafeteria equipment. Lynn W. responded that except for the high school level, the food comes already prepared. Diana C. commented that it is important to allow enough time for the students to eat lunch. Mario A. added that at the elementary level, the teachers are contracted to have a free period during lunch time which would allow plenty of time for the children to eat. After discussing the above items, the Subcommittee agreed to remove the paragraph referring to lunch periods citing there are checks in place to address any concerns about lunch times.

Lynn W. stated that RIDE had been informed of recent changes to the USDA's recommendations for the amount of sodium and calories contained in snack foods. As a result, the District's policy will state "All a-la-carte snacks and beverages offered for sale as part of the program comply with the RI School Health Law 16-21-7, as amended from time to time, and USDA Competitive Foods Nutrition Standards". Concerning the paragraph referring to the availability of nutritional information on all foods served within the school, Marj M. asked how the District would be able to provide this. Patricia B. responded there are binders in the school kitchens containing nutritional label

information.

2 - Parent Nutrition Education

On the proposed draft, two paragraphs were suggested for inclusion under the above heading. The Subcommittee agreed that the paragraph with less wording would be best. Bill O. voiced a concern about implementation of this clause in the policy not wanting the District to become the “lunch bag police”. Lynn W. responded suggesting that the Wellness Committee provide a presentation to parents during kindergarten orientation. Mario A. added that the District is in the process of revamping the webpage. He stated there are already tools in place where parents can get updates from Chartwells. Mario A. commented that the way to implement this is not by being the “lunch bag police”, but by monitoring how many emails and presentations related to nutrition the District provides.

4 –Snacks and Beverages/Fundraising/Classroom Activities and Incentives/Other

Lynn W. proposed separating out Fundraising and Incentives from the above title to be listed as separate subtitles. Bill O'Dell asked whether “school environment” included football games. Lynn W. stated that this is just referring to classroom and environs. Christine O. asked if all football games were considered fundraisers. Mario A. responded that was not the case. Christine O. replied that as the proposed draft is written it would appear that the exemptions only apply to fundraisers. Diana C. feels the recommendation to separate

out the categories from the original general title is causing the above confusion. All subcommittee members agreed it would be best to retitle #4 to just read “Snacks and Beverages” with the following edit to the first sentence of that subsection: “All snacks and beverages served, sold or marketed in the school environment for any reason including student fundraisers, shall meet RI Nutrition Guidelines for School Vending and A La Carte Foods”.

(Karen L. left at 7:35 p.m.)

Student Physical Activity

During the first read through of the proposed draft, a discussion ensued concerning physical education/activity and whether it should be used as a disciplinary tool. The proposed recommendation states physical education/activity would only be withheld for instructional purposes or if a student’s behavior poses a risk to the well-being of other students. Lynn W. stated the feedback she has received is that students may need to exercise to “blow off steam”. Diana C. commented that she would like to see this continue as a disciplinary tool. Lynn W. stated that the consensus of the Wellness Committee is not to withhold recess for talking in class, but if a student acted in a violent manner, it would not be good to send that student out to recess. This would be left to the discretion of an administrator.

High School Handbook – Code of Discipline – Update

Marj M. brought up a concern that a draft copy of the High School

Student Handbook was disseminated to parents and students this evening without first going through the School Committee. She stated what was particularly concerning is that the policy on academic eligibility did not adhere to the School Committee's recommendations presented earlier in the year during a School Committee Meeting. The School Committee's position was that a student should not be allowed to participate in an extra-curricular activity if they are failing classes. Marj M. stated what was presented at tonight's meeting at the high school was not in line with that recommendation. Bill O. responded that it is important to find out from the administrators what their understanding of the School Committee's recommendation was to better determine why this information was disseminated to the parents and students.

Mario A. commented that a subcommittee was formed to develop a protocol for after school activities. Diana C. stated that during the conversation concerning academic eligibility at the recent School Committee meeting, legal counsel advised that if there is not a School Committee Policy in place, it is "none of our business". Diana C. commented that if there needs to be a School Committee Policy related to academic eligibility, it should go to the Policy Subcommittee.

Bill O. asked the School Committee secretary to request of the School Committee Chairman that Academic Eligibility be placed on the

upcoming Workshop agenda for discussion at that time.

Lynn W. stated that the revisions to the handbook related to the cheating policy did not include the recommendations of the Subcommittee.

Future Agenda Items

- Health & Wellness Policy**
- Academic Eligibility**
- Policy Review List**

Next meeting will be held on September 3, 2013.

Adjournment

MOTION: At 8:11 pm Diana C. motioned to adjourn; Lynn W. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/kd